

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN KEITH BALES**, on January 29, 2003 at 3 P.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Keith Bales, Chairman (R)
Sen. Dale Mahlum, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Ken (Kim) Hansen (D)
Sen. Sam Kitzenberg (R)
Sen. Walter McNutt (R)
Sen. Linda Nelson (D)
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)
Sen. Corey Stapleton (R)
Sen. Mike Taylor (R)
Sen. Joseph (Joe) Tropila (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Jennifer Stephens, Committee Secretary
Doug Sternberg, Legislative Branch

Please Note:

Audio-only Committees: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 62, 1/22/2003
Executive Action: HB 62

HEARING ON HB 62

Sponsor: REP. LARRY LEHMAN, HD 87, POWER

Proponents: Will Kissinger, MT Dept. of Agriculture
James Rehm, MT State Beekeepers Association
Mike Barrett, Helena

Opponents: None

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. LARRY LEHMAN, HD 87, POWER, submitted written testimony, **EXHIBIT**(ags19a01).

Proponents' Testimony:

Will Kissinger, MT Dept. of Agriculture, submitted written testimony, **EXHIBIT**(ags19a02).

James Rehm, MT State Beekeepers Association, said his association is strongly in favor of HB 62.

Mike Barrett, Helena, rose in support of HB 62. He also submitted written testimony, **EXHIBIT**(ags19a03).

Informational Testimony:

Laura Hink, Entomologist, MT Dept. of Agriculture, was present to answer any questions. Earl Barnes said he was also available to answer questions.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

SEN. MAHLUM asked what constituted a bee site. Mr. Rehm explained that an apiary is a site where there might be anywhere from one or two hives to 50 hives.

SEN. HANSEN asked if cutter bees were dealt with under the State Beekeepers Association. Mr. Rehm said they were separate from their organization.

SEN. TAYLOR wanted to know how many acres could be pollinated with a hive of bees. Mr. Rehm explained that different crops required different numbers of hives.

SEN. MCNUTT asked if the sites would become registered with the passing of HB 62. **Mr. Kissinger** said that each site should be registered already. The bill would just change the process of registration by basing it on the number of hives instead of the number of sites. Also, sites must be at least three miles away from each other.

SEN. NELSON asked **Mr. Rehm** if the Beekeepers Association is in charge of the hives in northeast Montana. **Mr. Rehm** said his group is not in charge of those hives. **SEN. NELSON** then asked approximately how many bees the association was in charge of. **Mr. Rehm** said the association was in charge of approximately 5,000 colonies of bees.

Earl Barnes rose to answer some questions concerning how many bees it takes to fertilize an acre. He remarked that from his experience, it takes approximately two and a half colonies to pollinate one acre of alfalfa. In Montana, if you are raising seed, he said you would use two and a half to three colonies.

SEN. TAYLOR asked **Mr. Barnes** how cutter bees and honey bees get along. **Mr. Barnes** said those bees seem to get along just fine together. He also explained that cutter bees are expensive and hard to propagate.

SEN. TROPILA asked **Laura Hink, Entomologist, MT Dept. of Agriculture**, if there was a scarcity of wild bees in Montana. **Ms. Hink** said there is a scarcity in Montana and throughout the US. **SEN. TROPILA** then asked who should be called if one witnesses a swarm of bees. **Ms. Hink** said she should be called.

SEN. MAHLUM asked how much honey could be retrieved from each colony per year. **Mrs. Hink** said approximately 90 pounds, on average.

SEN. BALES asked if all sites were registered. **Mr. Kissinger** said yes. **SEN. BALES** explained that he has two sites on his land that are registered but have not been used for three or four years. He wanted to know if some of the bee operators would be dropping their sites. **Mr. Kissinger** did not think that had been taken into account for the bill. He also explained that if sites are not used each year, they become open to be registered by someone else.

SEN. BALES asked the audience if anyone knew the number of hives that are registered but not being used. **Mr. Barnes** explained that when there is a dry summer, hives cannot be used because there is not enough sweet clover to attract the bees. This

becomes a complicated situation because after one year, someone else can come and register for the hive. **Mr. Barnes** said it was his intention to continue to register his hives so that he would be sure to have them during a moist summer.

SEN. TAYLOR asked where he could get a list of the registered sites. **Mr. Kissinger** said there were charts available.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. LARRY LEHMAN, explained that the beekeepers play a large role in Montana agriculture. He closed on HB 62.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 62

Motion/Vote: **SEN. NELSON** moved that **HB 62 BE CONCURRED IN.**
Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4 P.M.

SEN. KEITH BALES, Chairman

JENNIFER STEPHENS, Secretary

KB/JS

EXHIBIT (ags19aad)